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January 26, 2026

Alaska House State Affairs Committee
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801
Submitted via email

Dear Members of the Alaska House State Affairs Committee:

The Alaska Miners Association (AMA) writes to comment on HB124, an Act related to the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA).

AMA is a professional membership trade organization established in 1939 to represent the mining industry in Alaska. AMA's more than 1,400 members come from eight statewide branches: Anchorage, Denali, Fairbanks, Haines, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan/Prince of Wales, and Nome. Alaska's miners are individual prospectors, geologists, engineers, suction dredge miners, small family mines, junior mining companies, major mining companies, Alaska Native Corporations, and the contracting sector that supports Alaska's mining industry.

AMA respectfully opposes HB 124. Our opposition is grounded not in resistance to accountability or transparency, but in a clear set of values that have long defined Alaska's approach to responsible resource development: fairness, predictability, professionalism, and the belief that Alaskans are capable of developing their resources responsibly for the long-term benefit of the state.

Alaska's mining industry operates under some of the most rigorous environmental and permitting standards in the world. Our members accept this responsibility because it provides certainty, protects public trust, and ensures projects are developed safely and responsibly. Over many years, Alaska has worked across Administrations and Legislatures to refine this system so that decisions are timely, technically grounded, and free from unnecessary political interference. HB 124 moves Alaska away from that model.

AIDEA was created to reflect those same values. It is intended to be a professional development finance authority - one that evaluates projects based on merit, feasibility, and public benefit, not shifting political priorities. HB 124 fundamentally alters that role. By politicizing governance, adding open-ended approval gates, and weakening AIDEA's ability to act decisively, the bill replaces professional judgment with uncertainty. From our perspective, that is not accountability; it is instability.

Alaska's economy, and particularly its rural economy, depends on the state's ability to convert permitted projects into built infrastructure and long-term employment. Mining projects do not succeed on permits alone. They require ports, roads, energy systems, and financing structures that often exceed the capacity of the private sector to deliver independently. AIDEA exists to bridge that gap, and one of the best



examples of the successful model is the Delong Mountain Transportation System, the infrastructure between the world-class Red Dog Mine and the port that services it. HB 124 weakens the infrastructure and economic growth mission of AIDEA at a time when Alaska should be strengthening it.

We are also concerned that HB 124 sends the wrong message about Alaska's values as a development jurisdiction. Alaska has worked hard to demonstrate that it is a place where the rules are clear, the process is fair, and decisions—once made—can be relied upon. Reopening settled issues, layering new approvals on top of completed reviews, and subjecting financing decisions to political cycles undermines that credibility. The immense capital needed to advance a mining project in our state is mobile. When the regulatory environment in a jurisdiction is unfavorable, capital investment decisions are made elsewhere, denying Alaskans of important opportunities and benefits.

The Alaska Miners Association believes deeply in stewardship, accountability, and transparency. But we also believe that Alaska's future depends on institutions that are stable, professional, and capable of long-term thinking. HB 124, as written, does not align with those values. It risks trading durable economic opportunity for short-term political control, and in doing so, undermines the very system Alaska has spent years improving.

For these reasons, AMA urges legislators to reject HB 124. If improvements to AIDEA oversight are needed, they should be targeted, balanced, and designed to strengthen—rather than constrain—Alaska's ability to responsibly develop its natural resources for the benefit of all Alaskans.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment, and we are happy to discuss further at any time.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Skibinski".

Deantha Skibinski
Executive Director